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**JACKSON APPROVES \$33 MILLION PROGRAM TO DEVELOP  
SEWER AND WATER SYSTEMS IN SIX COASTAL COUNTIES IN  
MISSISSIPPI**

***HUD approval is first phase of Mississippi Gulf Coast Regional  
Infrastructure Program***

WASHINGTON - Housing and Urban Development Secretary Alphonso Jackson today approved a \$33 million Mississippi program that will ultimately bring central sewer and water service to six coastal counties in the state. Funded through \$5 billion HUD previously awarded the state through the Department's *Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program*, Mississippi intends to lay the groundwork for a larger *Gulf Coast Regional Infrastructure Program* to meet the anticipated demand of families expected to move further inland in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Mississippi will initially devote \$6.5 million to develop a master plan and another \$25 million to meet critical needs until the State launches its larger program to build central sewer and water systems in Pearl River, Stone, George, Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson counties.

"Mississippi families will need something more than wells and septic tanks," said Jackson. "The plan HUD is approving today will be a first investment in developing long-term sewer, water and storm drain systems in these Mississippi counties."

"Secretary Jackson is right on target that Mississippi must develop long-term, regional solutions to water, sewer, and storm water needs and I am grateful for his approval of these essential funds," said Gov. Haley Barbour.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, many coastal areas in southern Mississippi were without basic services such as potable water and wastewater. State officials expect many Mississippians will relocate to areas within the six-county coastal area that is not prone to flooding and other storm-related damage. Currently, this area does not have adequate water, wastewater and storm drainage infrastructure.

Before Mississippi can undertake its larger regional infrastructure development program, it intends to create this master plan to determine the needs for water, wastewater and storm water infrastructure in these six counties. The master plan will include the following:

- Assessment of pre- and post-Katrina water, wastewater, and storm water infrastructure
- Assessment of projected growth and relocation patterns in the six counties
- Development of short- and long-term water, wastewater and storm water infrastructure needs and costs
- Development of a prioritization process for required infrastructure

In addition, Mississippi will create a \$25 million emergency fund to address immediate and critical infrastructure needs determined by the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). To read the full text of Mississippi's plan, visit [www.mississippi.org/content.aspx?url=/page/3288&](http://www.mississippi.org/content.aspx?url=/page/3288&).

HUD is the nation's housing agency committed to increasing homeownership, particularly among minorities; creating affordable housing opportunities for low-income Americans; and, supporting the homeless, elderly, people with disabilities and people living with AIDS. The Department also promotes economic and community development, and enforces the nation's fair housing laws. More information about HUD and its programs is available on the Internet at [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov) and [espanol.hud.gov](http://espanol.hud.gov). For more information about FHA products, please visit [www.fha.gov](http://www.fha.gov).